

Managing home learning – evaluating digital and online teaching resources

No online or digital learning resource for home learning will be perfect, as all require compromises. However, the following are key considerations which might be helpful when evaluating any that schools are thinking of incorporating into pupils' home learning.

Aspect	Key questions	Notes
Ease of use	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is the resource easy to access on a wide range of devices, operating systems and browsers, rather than limited to particular ones?• Are there no technical obstacles, such as the installation of special software, drivers or codecs?• Are any instructions or 'help' features clear, comprehensive and well-pitched?• Are Interfaces and interactive features intuitive and easy to navigate, without demanding special knowledge?• Does the resource avoid straining processors and are download and loading times fast?• Are potential barriers to children avoided, e.g. by using pictorial (rather than just numeric) pass codes?• Does the resource minimise demands on pupils' fine motor skills (e.g. by making mouse operations simple)?• Can the resource be accessed entirely on screen, or do elements require printing?• Can pupils work purely on-screen, or do they need pen and paper?	

<p>Autonomy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it easy for pupils to work independently, with minimum input from parents at home, or from teachers remotely? • Is cognitive load managed well, so that pupils are not overwhelmed? • Does the resource provide enough scaffolding within activities to keep pupils working and learning on their own? • Are there ways for pupils to seek extra guidance, to avoid feeling 'stuck'? For example, are there ways for them to access 'clues', prompts or additional scaffolding? 	
<p>Integrity of subject content</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the content reflect the school's or a subject team's view of what is significant and appropriate knowledge, within a subject domain? For example, does it teach a version of 'English' which you recognise and value, or does it teach valid concepts in history? Does it teach ways of thinking in maths or science that are consistent with what you teach in school? • Is the resource content accurate and up-to-date? Have answers and facts been thoroughly checked? • Has any text been properly proof-read, and does it model coherence and precision in expression? 	
<p>Challenge & pitch</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the learning appropriately challenging? Are pupils being encouraged to think hard and to deepen their knowledge? • Is learning differentiated appropriately for pupils, if that is appropriate? For example, can they access material or tasks from different starting points, according to prior knowledge? • In the absence of a teacher or TA to offer bespoke support, does the resource offer enough flexibility – in outcome or scaffolding offered – to allow all pupils to achieve and to learn? 	

Instructional quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are any instructions clear and supportive? Are they repeated as necessary? • Are any explanations (or spoken) clear, well-paced? Are key ideas reinforced by repetition and appropriate emphasis? • Are illustrations and graphics clear and uncluttered, so that information and concepts are made clearer and more memorable? • If appropriate, is information 'dual-coded' - presented in both a verbal and a visual form, to aid retention? • Does the resource ensure that pupils have to refer back to previous learning, so that this is being consolidated and built upon? (For example, do 'lessons' or sessions begin with a review of learning, a quiz, or a reminder of key information? Or are references to prior knowledge woven in to materials?) • Is new material presented in manageable steps, so that cognitive load is controlled? • Are pupils asked lots of questions, so that they are being invited to think hard, and so that they are having to recall information repeatedly? • Does the resource provide high quality models for pupils to work towards, and high quality modelling of procedures and ways of thinking? • Are tasks scaffolded, so that pupils can make progress through them and can build on what they already know or can do? (For example, are more extended written responses scaffolded with sentence stems, questions, a suggested structure or vocabulary to include?) • Does the resource encourage enough practising of new material, so that pupils are securing knowledge before moving on? • Are pupils moved on from supported practice to independent practice? 	
Address	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the language and the tone of any printed or spoken material friendly and age-appropriate? • Are pupils likely to feel respected by the resource, without feeling patronised or condescended to? 	

Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is pupils' understanding being checked regularly, by the resource or by themselves? • Do pupils know that they are achieving, and how? • Are errors or misconceptions corrected straight away? • Does the school receive any feedback on engagement, completion rates, success rates, and so on? 	
Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do pupils enjoy using the resource? Do they feel motivated to start and to continue using it? • Is the visual and interactive design appealing to pupils, and does it hold their attention? • Is activity carefully graded, so that pupils begin comfortably and can warm up to harder material? • When possible or appropriate, are activities stepped, so that pupils are drawn through by a sort of capillary action of small but frequent achievements? • Does the resource use any successful techniques to 'reward' effort – with sounds, graphics, game-play or praise, for example? • Are any play or game-like elements genuinely purposeful and not putting the learning out of balance? 	
Aesthetic and design quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the interface pleasant to use, uncluttered and minimising of distraction? • Are aesthetics and design cues consistent? • Are graphics and images clear and helpful? • Is the visual design age-appropriate and friendly, without being patronising or off-putting to young users? 	
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is provision made for partially-sighted or hearing-impaired users (e.g. large text, large buttons, text to speech functions, or subtitles.) • Is any provision made for pupils with English as an additional language? 	